

AP83
C0.6
82.057

COLUMBIAN HISTORIAN.

"Enlightened minds and virtuous manners lead to the gates of glory."

VOL. I.

NEW RICHMOND, MAY 13, 1824.

NO. 1.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY A. C., J. & W. HERRON, AT \$1 50 CTS. PER ANNUM, PAYABLE HALF-YEARLY IN ADVANCE.

TO OUR PATRONS.

The COLUMBIAN HISTORIAN asks an enlightened and free people no apology for its birthright, but sallies forth to greet you as a national harbinger of liberty and knowledge. Its aim will be to impress on our infantile minds a public glow of freedom, and the right of being independent, and aspiring after wisdom & science.

The Columbian Historian will give an impartial and faithful history of North America, from its discovery until the present. In its columns, the brightest stars which ever adorned the halo of our diadem, will again be summoned into action—again will our departed Historians, Heroes & Heroines, Politicians, Divines, men of Science and Mechanics show to a wondring nation, what freemen are capable of doing, for the purpose of avoiding dastardly thralldom, and encouraged by the blessings of liberty and independence.

To detail the History of America from its discovery to its present state of importance, is an undertaking of universal utility—as the work will be compiled in a great measure.—We do not wish to infringe on the rights of others, as we shall duly extract in such a manner as to give the real authors credit. As an American, we promise nothing but plain and unvarnished truths, such as will convince every person of the rectitude of our course.

Of the Peopling of America—Old and New-Continents supposed to have been formerly joined—At present separated only by a narrow Strait—Conjectures concerning the first Migrations into the New-Continent—Mr. Pennant's opinion—Customs, &c. common to the eastern Asiatics and the Americans—Brute Creation migrated by the same Route.

THE questions which now presents themselves to our notice are, From what part of the Old-World America has, most probably, been peopled?—And how was this peopling accomplished?—

Few questions in the history of mankind have been more agitated than these.—Philosophers, & men of learning and ingenuity, have been speculating upon them, ever since the discovery of the American-Islands, by Christopher Columbus.—But notwithstanding all the labours of Acosta, of Grotius, and of many other writers of eminence, the subject still affords an ample field for the researches of the man of science, and for the fancies of the theorist.

Discoveries long ago made, inform us, that an intercourse between the Old-Continent and America might be carried on, with facility, from the north-west extremities of Europe and the north-east boundaries of Asia. In the ninth century the Norwegians discovered Greenland, and planted a colony there. The communi-

cation with that country was renewed in the last century by Moravian missionaries, in order to propagate their doctrines in that bleak and uncultivated region. By them we are informed that the north-west coast of Greenland is separated from America by a very narrow strait; that at the bottom of the bay it is highly probable that they are united; that the Esquimaux of America perfectly resemble the Greenlanders, in their aspect, dress, and mode of living; and that a Moravian missionary, well acquainted with the language of Greenland, having visited the country of the Esquimaux, found, to his astonishment, that they spoke the same language with the Greenlanders, and were, in every respect, the same people. The same species of animals, too, are found in the contiguous regions. The bear, the wolf, the fox, the hare, the deer, the roebuck, the elk, frequent the forests of North-America, as well as those in the north of Europe.

Other discoveries have proved, that if the two continents of Asia and America be separated at all, it is only by a narrow strait. From this part of the Old-Continent, also, inhabitants may have passed into the New; and the resemblance between the Indians of America and the eastern inhabitants of Asia, would induce us to conjecture that they have a common origin. This is the opinion adopted by Dr. Robertson, in his *History of America*, where we find it accompanied with the following narrative.

"While these immense regions which stretched eastward from the river Oby to the sea Kamtschatka were unknown, or imperfectly explored, the north-east extremities of our hemisphere

were supposed to be so far distant from any part of the New-World, that it was not easy to conceive how any communication should have been carried on between them. But the Russians, having subjected the western part of Siberia to their empire, gradually extended their knowledge of that vast country, by advancing towards the east into unknown provinces. These were discovered by hunters in their excursions after game, or by soldiers employed in levying the taxes; and the court of Moscow estimated the importance of those countries only by the small addition which they made to its revenue. At length, Peter the Great ascended the Russian throne: His enlightened, comprehensive mind, intent upon every circumstance that could aggrandize his empire, or render his reign illustrious, discerned consequences of those discoveries, which had escaped the observation of his ignorant predecessors. He perceived, that, in proportion as the regions of Asia extended towards the east, they must approach nearer to America; that the communication between the two continents, which had long been searched for in vain, would probably be found in this quarter; and that, by opening this intercourse, some part of the wealth and commerce of the western world might be made to flow into his dominions by a new channel. Such an object suited a genius that delighted in grand schemes. Peter drew up constructions with his own hand for prosecuting his design, and gave orders for carrying it into execution.

"His successors adopted his ideas, and pursued his plan. The officers whom the Russian court

employed in this service, had to struggle with so many difficulties, that their progress was extremely slow. Encouraged by some faint traditions among the people of Siberia concerning a successful voyage in the year 1648 round the north-east promontory of Asia, they attempted to follow the same course. Vessels were fitted out, with this view at different times, from the rivers Lena and Kolyma; but in a frozen ocean, which nature seems not to have destined for navigation, they were exposed to many disasters, without being able to accomplish their purpose. No vessel fitted out by the Russian court ever doubled this formidable cape; we are indebted for what is known of those extreme regions of Asia, to the discoveries made in excursions by land. In all those provinces, an opinion prevails, that countries of great extent and fertility lie at no considerable distance from their own coasts. These the Russians imagined to be part of America; and several circumstances concurred not only in confirming them in this belief, but in persuading them that some portion of that continent could not be very remote. Trees of various kinds, unknown in those naked regions of Asia, are driven upon the coast by an easterly wind. By the same wind floating ice is brought thither in a few days; flights of birds arrive annually from the same quarter; and a tradition obtains among the inhabitants, of an intercourse formerly carried on with some countries situated to the east.

"After weighing all these particulars, and comparing the position of the countries in Asia which they had discovered, with such

parts in the north-west of America as were already known; the Russian court formed a plan, which would have hardly occurred to any nation less accustomed to engage in arduous undertakings, and to contend with great difficulties. Orders were issued to build two vessels at Ochotz, in the sea of Kamtschatka, to sail on a voyage of discovery. Tho' that dreary uncultivated region furnished nothing that could be of use in constructing them but some larch-trees; though not only the iron, the cordage, the sails, and all the numerous articles requisite for their equipment, but the provisions for victualling them, were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, along rivers of difficult navigation, and roads almost impassable, the mandate of the sovereign, and the perseverance of the people, at last surmounted every obstacle. Two vessels were furnished; and, under the command of captains Behring and Tschirikow, sailed from Kamtschatka in quest of the New-World, in a quarter where it had never been approached. They shaped their course towards the east; and though a storm soon separated the vessels, which never rejoined, and many disasters befel them, the expectations from the voyage were not altogether frustrated. Each of the commanders discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent; and, according to their observations, it seems to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. Each set some of his people ashore: but in one place the inhabitants fled as the Russians approached; in another, they carried off those who landed, and de-

stroyed their boats. The violence of the weather, and the distress of their crews, obliged both to quit this inhospitable coast. In their return they touched at several islands, which stretch in a chain from east to west between the country which they had discovered and the coast of Asia. They had some intercourse with the natives, who seemed to them to resemble the North-Americans. They presented to the Russians the calumet, or pipe of peace, which is a symbol of friendship universal among the people of North-America, and an usage of arbitrary institution peculiar to them."

The more recent and accurate discoveries of that illustrious navigator Cook, and of his successor Clerke, have brought the matter still nearer to certainty. The sea, from the south of Behring's Straits to the crescent of isles between Asia and America, is very shallow. It deepens from these straits (as the British seas do from those to Dover) till soundings are lost in the Pacific-Ocean; but that does not take place but to the south of the isles. Between them and the straits is an increase from 12 to 54 fathoms, except only off St. Thaddeus-Noss where there is a channel of greater depth. From the volcanic disposition, it has been judged probable, not only that there was a separation of the continents at the straits of Behring, but that the whole space from the isles to that small opening had once been occupied by land; and that the fury of the watery element, actuated by that of fire, had in most remote times, subverted and overwhelmed the tract, and left the islands to serve as monumental fragments.

Without adopting all the fancies of Buffon, there can be no doubt, as the Abbe Chivigero observes, that our planet has been subject to great vicissitudes since the deluge. Ancient and modern histories confirm the truth which Ovid has sung in the name of Parthagoras:

*Vidi ego quod fuerat quandam solidissima tellus,
Esse fretum; vidi factas ex æquore terras.*

At present, they plough those lands over which ships, formerly, sailed, and now they sail over lands which were, formerly, cultivated: earthquakes have swallowed some lands, and subterraneous fires have thrown up others: the rivers have formed new soil with their mud; the sea, retreating from the shores, has lengthened the land in some places, and advancing in others has diminished it; it has separated some territories which were formerly united, and formed new straits and gulphs. We have examples of all these revolutions in the past century. Sicily was united to the continent of Naples, as Enbea, now the Black-Sea, was to Bœotia, Diodorus, Strabo, and other ancient authors, say the same thing of Spain, and of Africa, and affirm, that by a violent eruption of the ocean upon the land between the mountains Abyla and Calpe, that communication was broken, and the Mediterranean-Sea was formed. Among the people of Ceylon there is a tradition that a similar interruption of the sea separated their island from the peninsula of India. The same thing is believed by those of Malabar with respect to the isles of Maldivia, and with the

Malayans with respect to Sumatra. It is certain says the count de Buffon, that in Ceylon the earth has lost 30 or 40 leagues, which the sea has taken from it; on the contrary, Tongres, a place of the Low-Countries, has gained 30 leagues of land from the sea. The northern part of Egypt owes its existence to inundations of the Nile. The earth which this river has brought from the inland countries of Africa, and deposited in its inundations, has formed a soil of more than 25 cubits of depth. In like manner, adds the above author, the province of the Yellow River in China, and that of Louisiana, have only been formed of the mud of rivers. Pliny, Seneca, Diodorus, and Strabo, report innumerable examples of similar revolutions, which we omit, that our dissertation may not become too prolix; as also many modern revolutions, which are related in the theory of the earth of the Count de Buffon and other authors. In South America, all those who have observed with philosophic eyes the peninsula of Yucatan, do not doubt that that country has once been the bed of the sea; and, on the contrary, in the channel of Bahama, many indications show the island of Cuba to have been once united to the continent of Florida. In the strait which separates America from Asia many islands are found, which probably were the mountains belonging to that tract of land which we suppose to have been swallowed up by earthquakes; which is made more probable by the multitude of volcanoes which we know of in the peninsula of Kamtschatka. It is imagined, however, that the sinking of that land, and the separation of the two continents, has

been occasioned by those great and extraordinary earthquakes mentioned in the histories of the Americans, which formed an æra almost as memorable as that of the deluge. The histories of the Toltecas fix such earthquakes in the year I Tecpatl; but as we know not to what century that belonged, we can form no conjecture of the time that great calamity happened. If a great earthquake should overwhelm the isthmus of Suez, and there should be at the same time as great a scarcity of historians as there were in the first ages after the deluge, it would be doubted, in 300 or 400 years after, whether Asia had ever been united by that part to Africa; and many would firmly deny it.

Whether that great event, the separation of the continents, took place before or after the population of America, it is impossible for us to determine: but we are indebted to the abovementioned navigators for settling the long dispute about the point from which it was effected. Their observations prove, than in one place the distance between continent and continent, is only 30 miles, not (as the author of the *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains* would have it) 800 leagues. This narrow strait has also in the middle two islands, which would greatly facilitate the migration of the Asiatics into the New-World, supposing that it took place in canoes after the convulsion which rent the two continents asunder. Besides, it may be added, that these straits are, even in the summer, often filled with ice; in winter, often frozen. In either case, mankind might find an easy passage; in the last, the way was extremely

ready for quadrupeds to cross and stock the continent of America. But where, from the vast expanse of the north-eastern world, to fix on the first tribes who contributed to people the New-Continent, now inhabited from end to end, is a matter that baffles human reason. The learned may make bold and ingenious conjectures, but plain good sense cannot always accede to them.

As mankind increased in numbers, they naturally protruded one another forward. Wars might be another cause of migration. There appears no reason why the Asiatic north might not be an *officina virorum*, as well as the European. The overteeming country, to the east of the Riphæan-Mountains, must find it necessary to discharge its inhabitants: the first great wave of people was forced forward by the next to it, more tumid and more powerful than itself; successive and new impulses continually arriving, short rest was given to that which spread over a more eastern tract; disturbed again, it covered fresh regions; at length, reaching the farthest limits of the Old-World, found a new one with ample space to occupy unmolested for ages; till Columbus cursed them by a discovery, which brought again new sins and new deaths to both worlds.

"The inhabitants of the New-World (Mr. Pennant observes,) do not consist of the offspring of a single nation; different people, at several periods, arrived there; and it is impossible to say, that any one is now to be found on the original spot of its colonization. It is impossible, with the lights which we have so recently received, to admit that America could receive its inhabitants (at least

the bulk of them) from any other place than Eastren-Asia. a few proofs may be added, taken from customs or dresses common to the inhabitants of both worlds: some have been long extinct in the old, others remain in both in full force. "The custom of scalping was a barbarism in use with the Scythians, who carried about them, at all times, this savage mark of triumph: they cut a circle round the neck, and stripped off the skin, as they would that of an ox. A little image,, found among, the Kalmucs, of a Tartarian deity, mounted on a horse, and sitting on a human skin, with scalps pendant from the breast, fully illustrates the custom of the Scythian progenitors, as described by the Greek historian. This usage, as we well know, by horrid experience, is continued to this day in America. The ferocity of the Scythians to their prisoners extended to the remotest part of Asia. The Kamtschatkans, even at the the time of their discovery by the Russians, put their prisoners to death by the most lingering and excruciating inventions; a practice in full force to this day among the aboriginal Americans. A race of the Scythians were styled *Anthropophagi*, from their feeding on human flesh. The people of Nootka-Sound still make a repast on their fellow-creatures; but what is more wonderful, the savage allies of the British army have been known to throw the mangled limbs of the French prisoners into the horrible cauldron, and devour them with the same relish as those of a quadruped.

"The Scythians were said, for a certain time, annually to transform themselves into wolves, and again to resume the human shape. The new discovered Americans

about Nootka-Sound, at this time, disguise themselves in dresses made of the skins of wolves, and other wild beasts, and wear even the heads fitted to their own. These habits they use in the chase, to circumvent the animals of the field. But would not ignorance or superstition ascribe to a supernatural metamorphosis these temporary expedients to deceive the brute creation?

"In their marches, the Kamtschatkans never went abreast, but followed one another in the same track. The same custom is exactly observed by the Americans.

"The Tungusi, the most numerous nation resident in Siberia, prick their faces with small punctures, with a needle, in various shapes; then rub into them charcoal, so that the marks become indelible. This custom is still observed in several parts of America. The Indians on the back of Hudson's Bay, to this day, perform the operation exactly in the same manner, and puncture the skin into various figures; as the natives of New-Zealand do at present, and as the ancient Britons did with the herb glastum or woad; and the Virginians, on the first discovery, of that country by the English.

"The Tungusi use canoes made of birch-bark, distended over ribs of wood, and nicely sowed together. The Canadian, and many other American nations, use no other sort of boats. The paddles of the Tungusi, are broad at each end; those of the people near Cook's river, and of Oonala-scha, are of the same form.

"In burying of the dead, many of the American nations place the corpse at full length, after preparing it according to their cus-

toms; others place it in a sitting posture, and lay by it the most valuable clothing, wampum, and other matters. The Tartars did the same: and both people agree in covering the whole with earth, so as to form a tumulus, barrow, or carnedd.

"Some of the American nations hang their dead in trees. Certain of the Tungusi observe a similar custom.

"We can draw some analogy from dress; conveniency in that article must have consulted on both continents, and originally the materials must have been the same, the skins of birds and beasts. It is singular, that the conic bonnet of the Chinese should be found among the people of Nootka. I cannot give into the notion, that the Chinese contributed to the population, of the New-World; but we can, readily, admit, that a shipwreck might furnish those Americans with a pattern for that part of the dress.

"In respect to the features and form of the human body, almost every tribe found along the western coast has some similitude to the Tartar nations, and, still, retain the little eyes, small noses, high cheeks, and broad faces. They vary in size, from the lusty Calmucs to the little Nogaïans. The internal Americans, such as the Five-Indian nations, who are tall of body, robust in make, and of oblong faces, are derived from a variety among the Tartars themselves. The fine race of Tschutski seems to be the stock from which those Americans are derived. The Tschutski, again, from that fine race of Tartars the Kabardinski, or inhabitants of Kallarda.

"But, about Prince William's Sound begins a race chiefly dis-

tinguished by their dress, their canoes, and their instruments of the chase, from the tribes to the south of them. Here commences the Esquimaux people, or the race known by that name in the high latitudes of the eastern side of the continent. They may be divided into two varieties. At this place, they are of the largest size. As they advance northward, they decrease in height, till they dwindle into the dwarfish tribes which occupy some of the coasts of the Icy-Sea, and the maritime parts of Hudson's-Bay, of Greenland, and Terra de-Labrador. The famous Japanese map places some islands seemingly within the straits of Behring, on which is bestowed the title of *Ya-Zue*, or the Kingdom of the dwarfs. Does not this in some manner authenticate the chart, and give us reason to suppose that America was not unknown to the Japanese; and that they had (as is mentioned by Kæmpfer and Charlevoix) made voyages of discovery, and, according to the last, actually wintered on the continent? That they might have met with the Esquimaux is very probably; whom, in comparison of themselves, they might justly distinguish by the name of *dwarfs*. The reason of their low stature is very obvious: these dwell in a most severe climate, amidst penury of food; the former in one much more favourable, abundant in provisions; circumstances that tend to prevent the degeneracy of the human frame. At the island of Oonalascha, a dialect of the Esquimaux is in use, which was continued along the whole coast from thence northward."

The continent which stocked America with the human race, is supposed, by Mr. Pennant, to have

poured in the brute creation, through the same passage. Very few quadrupeds continued in the Peninsula of Kamtschatka; Mr. Pennant enumerates only 25 which are inhabitants of land: all the rest perished in their migration, and fixed their residence in the New-World. Seventeen of the Kamtschatkan quadrupeds are found in America: others are common only to Siberia, or Tartary, having, for unknown causes entirely evacuated Kamtschatka, and divided themselves between America and the parts of Asia above cited. Multitudes, again, have deserted the Old-World, even to an individual, and fixed their seats at distances most remote from the spot from which they took their departure; from mount Ararat, the resting-place of the ark, in a central part of the Old-World, and excellently adapted for the dispersion of the animal creation, to all its parts. "We need not be startled (says Mr. Pennant) at the vast journeys many of the quadrupeds took to arrive at their present seats. Might not numbers of species have found a convenient abode in the vast alps of Asia, instead of wandering to the Cordilleras of Chili? or might not others have been contented with the boundless plains of Tartary, instead of travelling thousands of miles to the extensive flats of Pampas? To endeavour to elucidate common difficulties is certainly a trouble worthy of the philosopher, and of the divine; not to attempt it would be a criminal indolence, a neglect to

Vindicate the ways of God to man.

But there are multitudes of points beyond the human abili-